

## **Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission**

### **Telecommunications Frequently Asked Questions**

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#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Q. What telecommunications services does the IURC regulate?**

- A.** The IURC regulates to some extent all of the following types of service:
- Local Exchange Service (incumbent, facilities-based, reseller, special access)
  - Long Distance Service
  - Alternative Operator Service

The IURC does not regulate rates or terms and conditions of wireless service.

#### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAPS**

**Q. How can I obtain an exchange map?**

- A.** Copies of individual exchange boundary maps are maintained in the Commission's office. To order a copy of an individual exchange boundary map, contact the IURC Telecommunications Division at 317-232-5559. Duplication charges may apply. State maps depicting all telephone exchanges are available from the Indiana Telecommunications Association, Inc. (ITA) – 54 Monument Circle, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Phone: (317) 635-1272 or FAX: (317) 635-0285.

#### **PAYPHONES**

**Q. What is a Public Interest Payphone?**

- A.** Public Interest Payphones are placed at locations where a payphone is required in the interest of public health, safety and welfare. When there would otherwise not be a payphone. Public Interest Payphones may only be provided at the request of or sponsorship of government entities or agencies.

**Q. How do I apply for a Public Interest Payphone?**

- A.** The IURC has specific forms that can be used to apply for a Public Interest Payphone.

## **PAYPHONES cont'd**

### **Q. Do payphone providers need to register with the IURC?**

**A.** Payphone providers do not need to register with the IURC.

### **Q. What are the general rules for payphone providers?**

**A.** The IURC regulations regarding payphones were first promulgated in Cause No. 38158 (November 25, 1987) and reaffirmed in Cause No. 40785 (September 18, 2000). Below is the list of current guidelines:

- Provider must be registered with the FCC
- Stations must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning the use of pay stations by disabled persons.
- Stations must provide dial tone first
- Stations must provide users with the ability to access the "0" Operator and 911 service (where available without the use of a coin or credit card).
- Stations must be able to provide credit card, collect, and third-party billed long-distance calls without the use of a coin.
- Stations must provide accessibility to all inter-exchange carriers where equal access is provided.
- Stations may not limit the duration of a local call.
- Provider must provide one local telephone directory annually.
- Stations must present an informal message, which may be audio or visual, in, on, or adjacent to the Coin Operated Pay Telephones (COPT) that explains its general operation. The payphone must also clearly display procedures to be followed when requesting refunds or reporting repair problems as well as the payphone provider's name, address and pricing and instructions for receiving a refund and/or reporting service problems.

### **Q. Who do I call if I experience a service problem with a pay phone?**

**A.** Because pay phones are owned by a variety of companies and entities, there is a decal or sticker affixed to the side of the phone or kiosk with information as to the company to be contacted in the event of service problems with the phone itself.

## **CONSUMER INFORMATION**

### **Q. What are the required components that must be on a company's telephone bill?**

**A.** The following items must be included in a telephone bill:

- The amount listed on the previous bill;
- Reflection of any payments made to the account;
- Reflection of any adjustments made to the account;
- Any past due amount (if applicable);
- The amount of current charges;
- Date amount is due by;
- Numbers for repair service, local service, long distance carrier (if applicable), and payment arrangements;
- State and Federal Taxes;
- Other local, state and federal charges.

## **CONSUMER INFORMATION cont'd**

### **Q. What are all the charges that appear on my local telephone bill?**

**A.** The way telephone service providers code the specific items on your bill may vary from company to company, but essentially the following list of items explains what is on your telephone bill:

- Telecommunications Relay System: (a.k.a. hearing impaired dual relay charge pursuant to IURC 39880);
- E911 charge- each county sets its own county specific emergency service charge and the IURC does not have authority over charges for E911 services. These charges are billed by the local service provider (including cellular) and appear on the customer's bill.
- In-State Carrier Line Charge- applies monthly per billed telephone number account where the customer has one or more lines with a given carrier as their primary inter-exchange carrier.
- Universal Connectivity Charge- This is a charge assessed by telecommunications companies to residential customers pursuant to the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (TA-96). TA-96 is designed, in part, to subsidize the costs of local telephone service in rural and high cost areas and to provide support for Internet services to schools, libraries and rural health care facilities. Every long distance carrier in the industry must contribute to this fund. In order to recover its costs, carriers assess a separate monthly fee, a universal connectivity charge or federal universal service fee, as a percentage of each customer's long distance bill.
- Number Portability Surcharge- This charge was approved by the FCC for local exchange companies to charge \$.28 to offset the cost associated with providing local number portability.
- Federal Access Charge- This is a charge that was part of the divestiture of AT&T and the Bell Operating Companies wherein the FCC required that all end users be able to have access to the long distance carrier of their choice. This access to a long distance carrier (a.k.a. inter-exchange carrier, "IXC") is divided into two general categories:
  - End User Access Charge: applies to every local loop and is sensitive to the nature of the circuit (i.e., residential, business, single versus multi-line, etc.) and appears on a bill regardless of whether or not a customer ever places a long distance call.
  - The Carrier Access Charge: applies to all IXCs that connect the local loop. This charge is paid by the IXC to the LEC according to usage-sensitivity measured by minutes of use and the length of the loop from the point of presence to the termination point in the LECs network.

### **Q. Other than my incumbent local exchange carrier, from whom can I obtain service?**

**A.** There are a number of CLECs (Competitive Local Exchange Carriers) providing local exchange service to various areas throughout the state. Your local telephone directory is a good source for locating these providers in your area.

**Q. Does the IURC regulate cellular towers?**

**A.** No. The local government that has zoning authority over the proposed or existing cell tower location regulates the placement and construction of cell towers or wireless facilities. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 confirms the right of local zoning authorities to regulate the placement, construction and modification of wireless facilities. However, local governments cannot unreasonably discriminate among wireless providers or prohibit wireless services from their jurisdiction. Further, State and local government cannot regulate the placement, construction or modification of the facility on the basis of environmental effects of the radio frequency emissions, providing that the facility complies with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations regarding radio frequency emissions. Some local governments choose not to regulate cell towers and others choose not to implement any zoning regulations.

**Q. Does the IURC regulate cellular/wireless companies?**

**A.** The rates and the quality of service of cellular/wireless companies are not regulated by the IURC and they are not required to file a tariff. However, the IURC does keep track of cellular/wireless companies or cellular/wireless service providers doing business in Indiana by requiring them to obtain a CTA for Commercial Mobile Radio Services (CMRS). This type of CTA requires the company to notify the commission of any changes to the company, such as name or address changes, pay a public utility fee and agree to abide by any future regulations or orders regarding CMRS. Because cellular/wireless services are considered to be competitive, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 prohibits State governments from regulating their rates unless it can be demonstrated that a cellular/wireless service company serves as a replacement for local exchange service for a substantial portion of a community or area.

**Q. Does the IURC regulate pager/beeper service providers?**

**A.** The IURC does not regulate the rates or quality of service of pager/beeper companies, but does require pager/beeper service providers within the state to identify themselves by filing an application for a Radio Common Carrier or Commercial Radio Service CTA.

**Q. How do pager/beeper service providers obtain a CTA for service provision?**

**A.** The two page CMRS CTA application can be obtained from the IURC website and mailed to the Commission at the address listed at the top of the application. A Certificate of Authority must accompany the completed application form from the Indiana Secretary of State authorizing the business name and/or d/b/a used by the company. There is no application fee, but the company will be required to pay an annual utility fee, which is based on the company's earned revenue in the state of Indiana.

**Q. What is slamming and how do I protect myself?**

**A.** Slamming is the practice of switching a telephone customer's long distance provider without obtaining permission from the customer. You can protect yourself from slamming by calling your local exchange provider and requesting that a Primary Interexchange Carrier (PIC) freeze be placed on your account. If you are slammed, you should contact your local telephone service provider and then call the IURC Consumer Affairs Division to register the incident

**Q. What is cramming and how do I protect myself?**

**A.** Cramming is the practice of billing telephone customers for telecommunications or other services, which they did not order, authorize or use. You can protect yourself from cramming by closely examining your telephone bill each month to be sure that you understand and have authorized all of the services for which you are being billed. If services appear on the bill that you did not order you should call your local telephone service provider and then call the IURC Consumer Affairs Division to register the incident.

**Q. Why is there a need for new Area Codes?**

**A.** Due to the demand of second lines and other telecommunications services including cellular/wireless, faxes, modems, and pagers/beeper for individuals, small businesses and large businesses, and the general increase in population, this has resulted in an exhaust of numbering resources.

**Q. What areas of Indiana are getting new Area Codes?**

**A.** The 219 Area Code, which covers the northern third of the State of Indiana, has been split into three areas: western, central and eastern. The western region, including the communities of Gary, Michigan City, Valparaiso, Lowell and Rensselaer, will retain the 219 Area Code. The central region, including the communities of South Bend, Elkhart, Winamac, Logansport and Monticello, will be assigned the 574 Area Code. The eastern area, including the communities of Lagrange, Fort Wayne, North Manchester, Silver Lake, Wabash, Warren and Portland, will be assigned the 260 Area Code.

**Q. When will these new Area Codes go into effect?**

**A.** The new Area Codes can be optionally dialed beginning January 15, 2002. The new Area Codes must be dialed beginning on June 14, 2002.

**Q. Will a new Area Code affect the cost of my telephone service?**

**A.** NO. All calls that were local prior to the introduction of new Area Codes will continue to be local after the new Area Codes are in place. The implementation of a new Area Code will not result in an increase of your local phone bill.

**Q. Why isn't there a special Area Code for pagers and wireless phones?**

**A.** The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission asked the Federal Communications Commission to allow "technology specific" Area Codes. Such Area Codes could have been implemented to meet the capacity needs of wireless and pager service providers. The FCC rejected this approach for fear that it would unduly discriminate against pager and wireless providers.

## **CARRIER INFORMATION**

### **Q. What telecommunications companies are regulated by the IURC?**

**A.** The IURC, via IC 8-1-2-88, has the authority to issue Certificates of Territorial Authority (CTA) for the provision of telecommunications service in Indiana. This applies to all types of telecommunications providers including Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs), Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs), Inter-exchange Carriers (IXCs), Alternate Operator Service (AOS) providers and Cellular Service providers. The Commission does not actively regulate interstate IXCs, Cellular, and AOS providers beyond issuing a CTA because of FCC jurisdiction of these carriers. The Commission actively regulates all other providers.

### **Q. How does a new telecommunications company obtain certification to become a facilities-based CLEC, a CLEC reseller, IXC, Alternate Operator Services Provider, or cellular provider?**

**A.** A telecommunications company that wants to be certified to provide telecommunications service in Indiana needs to acquire a Certificate of Territorial Authority (CTA) from the Commission. Companies providing facilities-based and AOS services must petition the Commission for a CTA. The petitioning company must be represented by an attorney licensed/authorized to practice law in the state of Indiana. Additionally, petitioning companies must provide proof of certification from the Secretary of State's Office authorizing the transaction of business in the state of Indiana. Procedures for this process are published on the Commission's website.

### **Q. How long does the IURC CTA application process take?**

**A.** There is no pre-defined time period for this process although typically approval may be granted between 60 – 90 days. Applications for toll reseller, AOS or local exchange reseller authority are approved on a "next day approval" basis.

### **Q. How do I file a tariff?**

**A.** Companies who provide regulated telecommunications services must obtain a Certificate of Territorial Authority (CTA). In most cases, a tariff filing is required after the issuance of a CTA. If there are any unique requirements pertaining to a specific telecommunications service provider, they will be noted in the order granting the CTA. The tariff should list all rates, charges and rules and regulations affecting customers. Any changes to an original tariff must also be filed with the IURC. A tariff is filed in the form of hard copy, which the IURC keeps on file. Per General Administrative Order 1998-2, the company must also provide an electronic copy of the tariff via a link to the company's website with a posting of the tariff.

### **Q. What are the tariffing requirements at the IURC?**

**A.** To file a tariff or tariff changes, provide two hard copies to the IURC Telecommunications Division's Tariff Administrator to be dated-stamped "Received". One tariff will be the IURC copy and one will be the telecommunications service provider's copy, which will be returned to them after the tariff is approved. Many companies provide a cover letter or transmittal sheet to be date-stamped and sent to the carrier for proof of submittal. The electronic version of the tariff on the company's website must also be kept up to date reflecting all approved changes and/or modifications.

**Q. What if my company is filing for bankruptcy and needs to withdraw its CTA?**

A. The voluntary relinquishment/withdrawal of the authority granted your company via the Commission's issuance of a CTA can be accomplished utilizing the "Verified Notice of Change In A Certificate Of Territorial Authority..." form found in the Telecommunications section of the Commission's website. These applications are processed on a "next day approval" basis.

**Q. What are the requirements for notifying customers if a company cancels its CTA?**

A. The IURC has not promulgated specific rules regulating customer notification of the cessation of service due to a carrier ceasing to offer service. However, customers should be provided with sufficient advance notice so they have time to find an alternative provider.

**Q. If at some point, a company obtained a CTA from the IURC but, has no plans to do business in the state of Indiana should that CTA be relinquished?**

A. Yes.

**Q. What is the process for changing or transferring CTA "ownership?"**

A. The appropriate forms to be used to accomplish these type changes can be found on the Commission website.

**Wholesale Services**

**Q. Who does wholesale service apply to?**

A. Wholesale service/pricing applies to CLECs/Resellers of telephone service. These providers obtain service from the ILEC at wholesale rates. They then resell that service at retail rates.

**Q. What is the wholesale discount for Ameritech?**

A. As part of Cause No. 41055 CLECs can obtain a 21.46% discount off of Ameritech's retail rates if the CLEC requests operator services/directory assistance and 22.13% if the CLEC does not request operator services/directory assistance. Ameritech's wholesale tariff is in Part 22 of its Catalog that can be accessed through their website.

**Q. What is the wholesale discount for Verizon?**

A. As part of Cause No. 41117 CLECs can obtain a 19.58% discount off of Verizon's retail rates if the CLEC requests operator services/directory assistance and 22.30% if the CLEC does not request operator services/directory assistance. Verizon's wholesale tariff can be accessed through their website.

**Q. What is the wholesale discount for Sprint?**

A. As part of Cause No. 40785-S3 CLECs can obtain a 15% discount off of Sprints' retail rates.

**Q. What are UNEs?**

A. The acronym UNE stands for Unbundled Network Element. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires the Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs) to make available to CLECs their network elements on an incremental cost basis. UNEs are defined as physical and functional elements of the network including Network Interface Devices (NIDS), local loops, switch ports, and dedicated and common transport facilities.

**Q. What are UNE-Ps?**

**A.** UNE-Ps are Unbundled Network Element – Platforms. A UNE-P is a combination of UNEs that produces a complete set in order to provide an end-to-end circuit.

**Q. What are the UNE rates for Ameritech?**

**A.** In Cause No. 40611 Ameritech was required to file a UNE tariff. That tariff has not been approved by the IURC. If you would like a copy of the proposed tariff please contact:

Joel Fishkin  
IURC - Telecommunications  
302 West Washington Street, Room #E306  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
317.233-3464  
*jfishkin@urc.state.in.us*

**Q. What are the UNE rates for Verizon?**

**A.** In Cause No. 40618 Verizon was required to file a UNE tariff. That tariff has not been approved by the IURC. If you would like a copy of the proposed tariff please contact:

Joel Fishkin  
IURC - Telecommunications  
302 West Washington Street, Room #E306  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
317.233-3464  
*jfishkin@urc.state.in.us*

**Q. What are the UNE rates for Sprint?**

**A.** Sprint does not have IURC approved UNE rates. To date, CLECs have been able to negotiate UNE rates in various interconnection agreements. To obtain a copy of a Sprint/CLEC interconnection agreement, please contact our duplicating office.